



LETTER OF INTERFAITH DEMOCRATIC STATE POLITICAL COMMITMENTS

The Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns Inter-Religious Front for Justice and Peace has seen a rapid rise in issues around the meaning of democracy and the role of religions within it. We've come to perceive that these discussions are not reduced to attempts to exploit religion by political groups, so we understand that it is necessary to establish some fundamental social commitments.

Democracy, in addition to being a way of electing rulers, is also a vital tool for us, as a united and egalitarian country, to promote the common good. We understand that for the strengthening of our nation, it is urgent that the functioning of society is not based on the use of violence or on the abuse of economic or political power that oppresses some for the benefit of others. In our view it is the role of religions, therefore, to contribute to respect for diversity, harmony and genuine cooperation throughout society, including inter-religious, interfaith and inter-convictional dialogue.

In the light of this perspective, we call on all elected politicians and candidates in all instances of Brazilian public power, from the federal to the municipal level, to unite around common values of the international rule of law, under the guidance of the National Constitution and the Declaration Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (UN), in line with the centenary history of the international interreligious movement, and to undertake to defend and promote the following guidelines in their mandates:

1. Defense of the Secular State and Inter-Religious Cooperation: The state cannot privilege the interests of any religious group, including political instrumentalization by specific groups that suggest authoritarianism or fanaticism. We defend a secular, secular, multi-religious, inter-religious and inter-conviction public power that protects freedom of conscience, belief, disbelief and religion of all its citizens, actively combating racism, religious intolerance and violence by guaranteeing the protection and security of people and places of worship, education and a culture of peace.

2. Equal Dignity of All People: Faced with the diversity that marks society, we are opposed to any argument or policy that belittles life or that promotes the demonization of any social segment. We defend that the dignity and life of each person must be respected, regardless of the group to which they belong or their capabilities, since human diversity, when nurtured by solidarity and reparative policies, has proven to be a powerful vehicle for creating new horizons for good common. In this sense, we defend practical actions in favor of women's rights, gender equality, structural anti-racism, anti-capacitance including neurodiversity, intergenerational communion for the rights of the elderly and children, and the defense of native peoples.

3. Social Justice: Recognizing the countless challenges that still persist in the promotion of a just society, we remain committed to the defense of justice and well-being, guaranteed to all people by the Federal Constitution, without which instability and violence will persist. We call on governments to focus their attention and deliberations on their constitutional obligations to put an immediate end to hunger, provide decent housing, ensure adequate health care, allow legal defense and prosecution, promote labor rights, expand non-denominational secular education, and provide access to culture for the entire population of the country.

4. Combating Violence and Promoting a Culture of Peace: Due to the experiences we have in the international inter-religious movement, both historically and currently in conflict regions, and considering the unconstitutionality of the apology for crime, we stand vehemently against any form of violence, population weaponry and hate speech that pits against each other in society. We defend the culture of peace and non-violence, the resolution of conflicts through dialogue, education for solidarity and the right to peaceful civil protest, as so many inter-religious movements have practiced and practice, and which must in no way be criminalized.

5. Defense of Institutions and Combating Corruption: We know from history that political power, whether in religious or governmental organizations, without constant democratic vigilance and criticism, can lead to corruption and mismanagement of resources. As we recognize the fundamental role of religions in developing ethics and promoting the democratic rule of law, we invite governments to commit themselves to honesty and transparency, which must include the creation of devices to combat fraud and measures that promote the participation of civil society in public administration.

6. Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development: All religious traditions recognize, in their practices and sacred scriptures, the importance of the interconnection that sustains life on the planet, of respect and care for the environment, as an inherent part of our sacred mission as humanity. Faced with the alarming climate changes, we call on governments to commit not only to the non-destruction of nature, but to its recovery and balance in all policies undertaken, with the promotion of sustainable ways of life, following the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Earth Charter. In this matter, as in many others, we recognize the decisive contribution that indigenous peoples have to offer to the country's future.

7. Education for Human Rights: Religions and the state also have a decisive role to play in the education of children, adolescents, families, communities and society in general. In our faith traditions we are committed to contributing to the refinement of human character and dedication to the common good through compassion. We call on the state and civil society to promote secular education for awareness and defense of human rights.

Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns Inter-Religious Front for Justice and Peace, October 22, 2022.